


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>Spectrum Mid-America, LLC and its subsidiary Spectrum Mid-America WI-FY2022, LLC, each managed by Charter Communications, Inc. ("Spectrum" or "Charter") 1320 N Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Milwaukee, WI 53212 Attn: Celeste Flynn 414-277-4193 Celeste.flynn@charter.com</p>	<p>Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.</p> <p>Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.</p>
	<p>Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</p>
	<p>Date: December 1, 2021</p>
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>	
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>	
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>Joseph J. Sherer II</p>	<p>Title:</p> <p>Vice President, Regional Engineering of Charter Communications, Inc., the Manager of the Applicants</p>
<p>Phone: (608) 467-9202</p>	
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>3/17/2022</p>

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Spectrum Mid-America, LLC and its subsidiary Spectrum Mid-America WI-FY2022, LLC each managed by Charter Communications, Inc. ("Spectrum" or "Charter")	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$3,876,877
Federal Employer Identification No. Spectrum Mid-America, LLC: 43-1857213 Spectrum Mid-America WI-FY2022, LLC: 88-1251860	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$4,035,212
Contact Name and Title Celeste Flynn, Director, Govt. Affairs	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$7,912,089
Telephone Number (414)277-4193	Project Name BB App Spectrum, Wood County
E-mail Address(es) celeste.flynn@charter.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTP EPON
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant N/A	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last-Mile
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Public Partner Name: Wood County Attn: Jason Grueneberg Address: 400 Market Street, Wisconsin Rapids 54494 FEIN Number: 39-6005763	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Charter requests a grant to support the construction of a new last-mile fiber-to-the-premises ("FTTP") via Ethernet passive optical network ("FTTP EPON" or "EPON") to provide high-speed broadband access to approximately 1058 unserved and underserved locations in parts of the Towns of Lincoln, Rock, Cameron and Marshfield in North Wood County; parts of Towns of Port Edwards and Saratoga in South Wood County. Charter does not request any funding to support its existing network infrastructure.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1000 Mbps (Scalable to higher Gig speeds in the future)	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 500 Mbps (Scalable to 1000 Mbps / 1 Gig or higher in the future)

Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 200 Mbps (30 Mbps – Spectrum’s low income offering)	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 10 Mbps (4 Mbps – Spectrum’s low income offering)
County or Counties served by this project Wood	Community or Communities served by this project Parts of the Towns of Lincoln, Rock, Cameron and Marshfield in North Wood County; Parts of Towns of Port Edwards and Saratoga in South Wood County
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve AT&T, CenturyLink, TDS	
Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no) Yes	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) No
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 2	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 1056
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 0	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 7
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) N/A	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) Yes
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) Yes and through its successor program the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing’s Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) Yes
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission’s voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) Yes	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Spectrum Mid-America, LLC and its subsidiary Spectrum Mid-America WI-FY2022, LLC, each managed by Charter Communications, Inc.	BB App Spectrum, Wood County

Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 2,870,906.00	\$ 2,988,156.00	\$ 5,859,062.00
2	Equipment	\$ 1,005,971.00	\$ 1,047,056.00	\$ 2,053,027.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)			\$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 3,876,877.00	\$ 4,035,212.00	\$ 7,912,089.00
		51.0% match requested		

Pledged Contributions

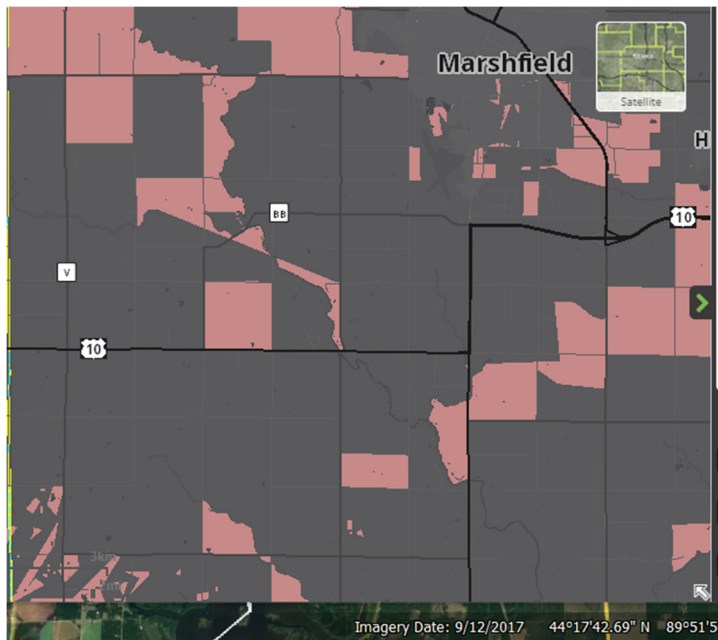
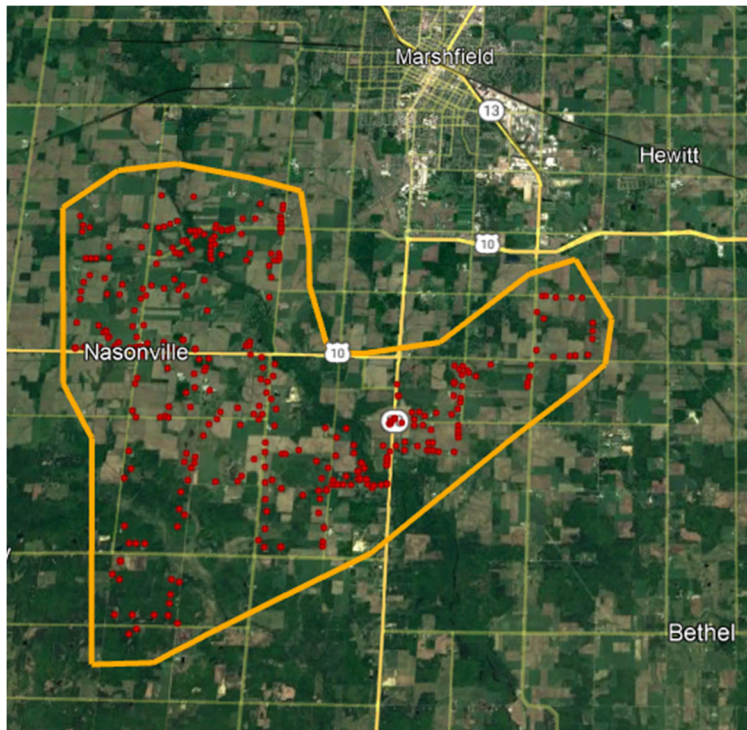
#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Spectrum Mid-America, LLC and its subsidiary Spectrum Mid-America WI-FY2022, LLC, each managed by Charter Communications, Inc.	Applicant	Cash	\$ 4,035,212.00
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 4,035,212.00

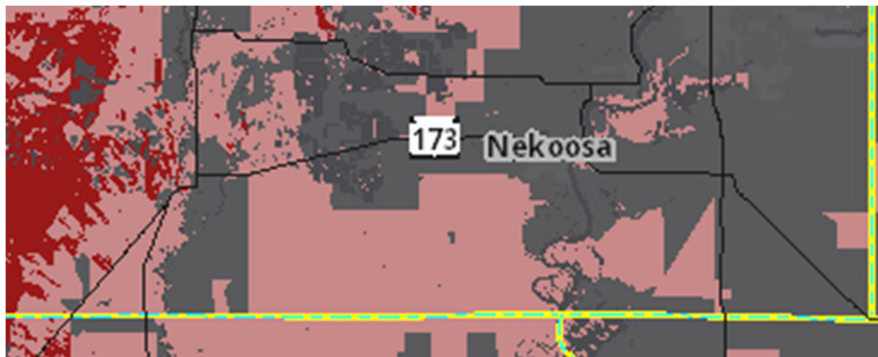
These costs do not include certain direct and indirect costs, reflecting contributions to the Project by Charter personnel that Charter is proposing to absorb itself, and for which this application does not seek grant funding. Project costs are limited to direct expenses for materials and contractor labor, only allowable expenses are included. All network builds and expansion will be fully owned by Charter. Funds requested in this Application will be used solely for the purpose of constructing and installing new broadband infrastructure throughout the designated grant area. While the Project will utilize and leverage existing facilities and assets to deliver broadband service to the Project area, Charter is not seeking funding for any portion of its existing asset base. No grant funds will be used for subsidizing operating costs.

Description of the Project Area to Be Served

The proposed Project Area is within **parts of the Towns of Lincoln, Rock, Cameron and Marshfield in North Wood County; parts of Towns of Port Edwards and Saratoga in South Wood County.** The Project includes building nearly 150 miles of fiber optic network to connect an estimated 1058 underserved homes, businesses and community anchor institutions. Maps of the proposed Project Area are shown below along with the associated eligibility maps.

Project Area:





I. Executive Summary of the Project

Wood County, in collaboration Charter, is requesting a grant to construct a last-mile fiber-to-the-premises (“FTTP”) via Ethernet passive optical network (“FTTP EPON” or “EPON”) to provide service to unserved and underserved households in Wood County (the “Project”). The proposed Project Area is within **parts of the Towns of Lincoln, Rock, Cameron and Marshfield in North Wood County; parts of Towns of Port Edwards and Saratoga in South Wood County. The Project includes building nearly 150 miles of fiber optic network to connect an estimated 1058 underserved homes, businesses and community anchor institutions.**

The Project will use Charter’s FTTP EPON architecture, a standardized and mature model that is operated by Charter across the country, engineered and managed to meet 1 Gbps downstream speeds, 500 Mbps upstream speeds (and engineered to be scalable to higher speeds in the future), and latency of well below 100 milliseconds. Charter’s FTTP EPON deployment is relevant and suitable for remote learning and remote working, offering very high bandwidth and low latency service attributes that accommodate numerous members of a household or small business simultaneously using bandwidth-intensive applications, such as video conferencing, telemedicine, video streaming, gaming, virtual or augmented reality sessions, and numerous other applications. New customers in the Project Area will have access to several Internet speed options, including Charter’s “Spectrum Internet” with a standard starting speed of up to 200/10 Mbps and Charter’s “Internet Gig” service at up to 1000/500 Mbps. Additional services that will be available to Charter Internet customers include, but are not limited to, anti-virus security protection and in-home WiFi. As an added benefit of its FTTP network, Charter will also be in a position to offer competitive video, mobile and voice services in the grant area.

Because Charter has a well-established process for initiating and overseeing new construction projects, existing relationships with contractors to perform design, make-ready and construction work, and holds numerous regulatory authorizations and pole attachment agreements that can facilitate prompt access to rights-of-way and utility poles, it anticipates that it would be able to start work on the Project promptly upon approval. If awarded grant funds, Charter anticipates beginning the project promptly with completion within the project period of up to 24 months, subject to timing of grant awards. Any delay in meeting that time frame related to pole attachment make-ready work required to install facilities, permitting, ability to access relevant locations, or other issues outside Spectrum’s reasonable control, including pandemic-related or raw materials shortages, would promptly be brought to the attention of the PSC in order to secure additional time to complete the Project.

II. Priority Factors

a. Matching Funds

Charter estimates the direct cost of this network construction at \$7,912,089, and requests a \$3,876,877 (49%) grant to complete the Project. Charter would contribute the remaining cost to complete the Project—\$4,035,212, or 51% of the Project’s up-front, direct construction costs. In addition, Charter will absorb all indirect costs and all operational costs of the Project going forward.

Charter’s commitment to contribute or absorb substantial costs associated with the Project, and seek grant funding for only a portion of the direct construction costs for the new network facilities, results in a budget that will leverage Charter’s existing resources, maximize the impact of grant funds, and streamline grant administration due to the limited nature of the expenditures for which Charter is seeking reimbursement.

Charter will be able to leverage its substantial existing internal resources and expertise to provide its management and supervision of the Project, and is not seeking reimbursement of its costs associated with project administration or any design, coordination, and other tasks that will be carried out by Charter internal employees within its construction, engineering, and field operations organizations. In addition to increasing the cost-effectiveness of state funds, Charter's commitment to limit the expenses included in the budget will simplify administration of the grant and verification that grant funds are expended only for allowable costs.

As set forth in the accompanying budget spreadsheet and justification, the Project includes within its proposed budget only a limited set of Charter's estimated direct, verifiable costs of construction. These consist of estimated material costs; direct contractor labor to carry out design, make-ready, and construction work; and licensing/permitting expenses. Indirect costs and certain other direct costs associated with the effort—such as the contributions by Charter's internal employees on project design, supervision, and management—will be absorbed by Charter as part of its regular operations.

The network will also be backed and operated by Charter, the nation's second-largest broadband provider with extensive experience owning, operating, maintaining, and upgrading broadband networks, as well as well-recognized financial stability. Charter's financial resources and recognized, investment-backed commitment to rural America provide reassurance that Charter will be able to carry out the terms of the grant and continue to operate the system going forward. While these resources and assets are essential for the Project's success, Charter is not requesting any grant funding or support for its existing assets or facilities.

b. Public-private partnership

Proposed Joint Project Between Wood County and Charter

The Project will be a joint effort between Wood County and Charter, with Charter acting as the primary applicant and assuming responsibility for the construction and operation of the proposed network.

Wood County is actively engaged with the Project, and will:

- Support the project through collaborative oversight, community engagement, facilitating installation operations, and direct marketing activities.
- Consult with Charter to verify build-to-location data in the proposal, including final verification of Project locations.
- Support Removal of Regulatory Barriers. Charter, as described below, is well versed in managing the regulatory processes associated with the deployment of its broadband network. Nonetheless, sometimes obstacles arise that are beyond Charter's control, such as local permitting issues, pole attachments, and access to rights-of-way and easements. To the extent it is within its scope of authority, Wood County will work with Charter to coordinate removal of these obstacles.

Charter, described in more detail below, is an experienced service provider and a leading broadband company, and is well-versed and experienced in abiding by all necessary federal, state, and local requirements that are impacted during the build out and expansion of its network. Charter's role in the Covered Partnership will consist of:

- **Construction Management:** If the Project is selected for a grant, Charter will work with Town of Presque Isle to verify Project data regarding unserved and underserved households and

businesses, secure the necessary permits, pole attachments, and other authority as necessary to support the Projects. In addition, Charter will complete the construction plan (including timeframes and costs) and manage all other aspects of the construction effort, maintenance of the system, and customer intake and service delivery. All networks builds and expansion will be fully owned by Charter or a Charter affiliate.

- **Commitment of Funds and Personnel:** If the Project is selected for a grant, Charter will contribute substantial private financial and operational resources to ensure the success of the Project, consisting of:
 1. A direct cash contribution to the direct design, construction, and licensing and permitting costs for the Project (a commitment estimated at \$4,035,212, or 51% of the estimated direct construction costs of the Project);
 2. A contribution of all indirect costs of the Project, which Charter will absorb itself; and
 3. By absorbing all other direct costs of the Project not captured in the direct design, construction, and licensing/permitting costs, including supervision and management of the effort by Charter personnel.
- **Collaborating on Community Engagement:** Working with communities Wood County to assist with digital literacy and broadband adoption strategies.

Letters of Commitment for each member of the partnership, setting forth their respective roles, are attached to this application as **Exhibit A**.

c. Existing broadband service

The Project Area has access to only one provider offering DSL service. According to the PSC's eligibility map, the proposed Project Area is eligible for the grant program. The Project will have a substantial impact in the Project Area by connecting an estimated 1058 households, businesses and anchor institutions, to last-mile connections providing 100% of those locations with access to a first-in-class, Gigabit network offering speeds of up to 1000Mbps/500Mbps with very low latency, transforming the broadband offerings available in the community.

Current Competitor Speeds in Project Area

Wireline Carrier*	FCC Tier	Tech Type	Max Down Speed	Max Up Speed	Census Block Count	% of Project Census Blocks**
Telephone and Data Systems, Inc.	<= 25 Mbps	DSL	25	5	40	35.7%
Telephone and Data Systems, Inc.	> 25 and <= 100 Mbps	DSL	100	15	12	10.7%
Wood County Telephone Company	<= 25 Mbps	DSL	20	20	59	52.7%
*Competitors who do not specify speeds are not included in list.						
**Does not total 100% as multiple competitors can overlap and some census blocks may be unserved						

Source: FCC Broadband 477 database Dec 2020 Tableau using project area census blocks

d. Project impact

Service Offerings and Price

Upon completion, residents in the proposed Project Area will have access to Charter's Spectrum Internet Gig service (up to 1000/500 Mbps). With Spectrum Internet, customers can simultaneously stream

videos, download music and more without sacrificing performance. Spectrum provides free modems and the fastest, most powerful in-home WiFi to do more on more devices.

Charter employs a nationwide pricing structure (called Spectrum Pricing & Packaging), which offers standardized pricing for each tier of broadband internet service Charter offers new customers across its service territory. Charter's pricing strategy ensures that rural customers receive the same pricing as other highly competitive areas in the state. Charter's wireline broadband offerings currently include no data caps, usage-based pricing, early termination or modem fees.

Current prices for Charter's Spectrum Internet Assist, Spectrum Internet, and Spectrum Internet Ultra service tiers, and its planned pricing for the Spectrum Internet Gig service tier, are as follows:¹

Table 1: Standard Charter Wireline Residential Broadband Service Offerings and Prices

Speed Tier ²	Downstream Mbps	Upstream Mbps	Standard Monthly Rate – without Promotional Pricing ³	Installation Fee
Spectrum Internet Assist ⁴	30	4	\$17.99	\$0.00 ⁵
Spectrum Internet	200	10	\$74.99	\$49.99
Spectrum Internet Ultra	400	20	\$94.99	\$49.99
Spectrum Internet Gig	1000	500	\$114.99	\$49.99

In addition to the standard, non-promotional rates itemized above, Charter may also offer promotional pricing, including bundled discounts. Charter's current promotional offerings can be found at <https://www.spectrum.com/internet>.⁶ Spectrum's terms of service will apply to all tiers of service. In addition to wireline broadband services, Charter will also offer video, voice, and mobile services in the grant area.

Low Income Programs

- **Construction Management:** If the Project is selected for a grant, Charter will work with Town of Presque Isle to verify Project data regarding unserved and underserved households and businesses, secure the necessary permits, pole attachments, and other authority as necessary to support the Projects. In addition, Charter will complete the construction plan (including timeframes and costs) and manage all other aspects of the construction effort, maintenance of the system, and customer intake and service delivery. All networks builds and expansion will be fully owned by Charter or a Charter affiliate.

¹ All rates, speeds and terms of service stated herein are subject to change.

² Represented pricing is for wireline residential broadband service only. In addition to wireline broadband services, Charter will also offer video, voice, and mobile services in the grant area.

³ Customers can add WiFi for \$5.00 per month (Spectrum Internet Assist, Spectrum Internet & Spectrum Internet Ultra).

⁴ Spectrum's Internet Assist program provides 30 Mbps broadband to qualified families with children on the National School Lunch Program or seniors receiving supplemental income.

⁵ For self-installation only. Additional fees may apply for professional installation.

⁶ All promotional offers are subject to change and may not be available in all areas or to all customers.

e. Scalability

Charter's network design offers scalability that non-wireline offerings cannot match. The FTTP EPON architecture proposed for the Project will scale to support customer growth and data usage growth for (a) ever increasing application requirements; (b) increasing quality demand; and (c) lower response/latency demands for ever increasing usage of highly interactive applications.

FTTP EPON technologies leverage fiber optic cables that provide vast amounts of bandwidth over a very low loss transmission medium. Fiber backbones operated by the largest communications companies in the world, such as Charter, rely on fiber optic cables to carry Terabits per second of traffic in a single fiber strand. This same technology concept is applied in the last mile FTTP architecture, providing growth support for decades to come. Scalable elements also include routers and switches that support higher speeds and services.

As Charter adds customers over time and as customers consume more bandwidth, Charter's scalable model and proven capacity management processes will accommodate this growth. While Charter will be building a new last mile FTTP EPON network in the Project Area, this last mile network will be connected to Charter's existing robust and scalable network tiers, which are already in place and ready for growth. Charter augments its capacity through normal operating procedures, and these procedures will extend to the proposed Project Area seamlessly.

In addition, recognizing the importance of fast, reliable service for community institutions, **Charter also offers up to 100 Gbps symmetrical speeds to large businesses, schools, libraries, hospitals, and other important community institutions through customized dedicated builds by its Spectrum Enterprise business organization.** The present application and proposed budget do not include the costs of such customized builds; however, Charter's network presence in the project area would better position the company to make such offers available.

f. Economic development

Provided by our Wood County Partner:

The economy of Wood County is dependent on the provision of high-speed broadband to all residents, in order to provide an adequate quality-of-life for families that make up the workforce. Additionally, adequate broadband infrastructure is essential for businesses to function and remain competitive in an ever increasing digital-dependent society.

Wood County is considered a mid-sized Wisconsin County based on its population of 72,999. The County is comprised of 22 townships, 8 villages and 4 cities. Besides the city of Wisconsin Rapids, and the city of Marshfield, most of the municipalities are considered rural in nature and experience the benefits of "small town" quality-of-life. The future sustainability of these rural communities is currently being challenged due to being unserved or underserved when it comes to broadband access. With COVID-19, the divide between communities with and without broadband has dramatically been realized, and it is a defining amenity that will impact which communities thrive and which ones stagnate or slip into decline.

From an economic development perspective, it is well-documented and apparent that areas without adequate broadband face significant disadvantages as compared to communities that are fortunate enough to offer it. Prior to COVID-19, Wood County was well aware of the challenges of minimizing projected population decline in the region. With heightened awareness of the need to have broadband

access, this challenge is further exacerbated. Simply put, most of Wood County will not be afforded the opportunity of future growth, and maintain the ability to sustain rural economies without adequate broadband. Future workforce solutions are also dependent on having communities that provide amenities that create a desirable quality-of-life, and the highest priority amenity is broadband.

Wood County has a strong agricultural economy as well. As agriculture and agribusiness continues to evolve, we know that the use of technology will continue to increase, as will the dependence on broadband for precision farming, and all other aspects of running a business. Agricultural operations in

Wood County generate \$1.1 billion in economic activity annually, and are especially vulnerable given their relatively rural locations in areas with very low population density. For agriculture in the County to remain competitive in the future, it is extremely important that there is access to necessary technology that is dependent on broadband.

How improved broadband service could have an impact on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.

Provided by our Wood County Partner:

There is a direct relationship between high-speed Internet access and residential property values. We do not have local sales data for this area of Wood County, so we cite national literature. From an article published pre-pandemic in [Applied Economics](#) in 2019: **“Results show that single-family homes with access to a 25 Mbps broadband connection have a price that is about \$5,977, or 3%, more than similar homes in neighborhoods with 1 Mbps. The rural premium is lower at \$5,099.”** *Post-pandemic, one may assume that 3% is a low estimate.*

How improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.

Provided by our Wood County Partner:

Many businesses that shifted to remote work during the pandemic experienced serious access and reliability issues. This project will enable local business to not only continue to offer remote employees options, but also speed businesses processes for those located in the Wood County project area. High speed internet is a necessary infrastructure for recruitment and retention of employees, as well as attracting new residents who can telecommute to work in large cities while enjoying a rural lifestyle.

Jason Grueneberg, Director of Planning and Zoning added, *As a resident of Wood County I fully realize the quality-of-life benefit of having high-speed broadband access. I am fortunate enough to live in the town of Grand Rapids that is served by 2 telecommunications providers. In the past few months I have been able to work from home and facilitate WebEx meetings for large groups across the region from my home office. My 2 daughters have been able to learn virtually from home. My family has been able to utilize telehealth options without putting a strain on an already stressed healthcare system. We have been able to stay in touch with family and friends in a virtual manner without risking the health of those who are high risk or furthering the spread of COVID-19. With recreation and entertainment options currently limited due to COVID-19, we are still able to spend family time together streaming entertainment and news.*

How the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.

A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.

Charter's proposed FTTP network is well suited for bandwidth-intensive applications like telemedicine. Charter's FTTP network would enable customers to engage in virtual doctor visits without leaving their homes. Accordingly, telehealth is a promising approach to reduce health disparities in rural communities by bringing specialized healthcare to these communities where such care was previously unavailable. Telehealth also facilitates monitoring and follow-up care for chronic health conditions, and connecting providers in remote areas, mental health services, and access to online pharmacies. Local public health departments can also leverage telehealth approaches to better serve their communities.

A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

Provided by our Wood County Partner:

This project area is served by three school districts: Marshfield, Nekoosa and Port Edwards. Although the schools are located in communities with robust broadband, students in the rural Towns do not have that luxury.

There are many online educational programs currently available for students of all ages in the project area. Schools have on-line learning labs, where a student can be physically located in their high school but take a class for college credit. While K-12 schools have largely returned to in-person instruction, some families prefer an on-line option. With improved internet access, families in the project area may wish to open-enroll in accredited online schools such as Acellus Academy, Virtual Charter Schools, or the Wisconsin Connections Academy. Mid-State Technical College offers 17 programs totally on-line, as well as 9 Career Accelerator Certificates which combine in-person and online instruction. All University of Wisconsin campuses, as well as most private colleges and universities, offer online classes and degrees that can be accessed with a high-speed connection.

g. Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas

This proposed project will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed Project Area.

III. Additional information supporting the application

a. Charter's History and Experience

Across the nation and in Wisconsin, Charter is a leading connectivity company providing superior products and services through its Spectrum brand of services and investing in the infrastructure, technology, and people powering the future. Charter is at the intersection of technology and entertainment, facilitating communications that connect more than 32 million residential and business customers in 41 states. Charter's commitment to serving customers and exceeding their expectations is the bedrock of Spectrum's business strategy and is the philosophy that guides its 93,000+ employees (that includes the approximately 3,600 employees who call Wisconsin home).

Nationally, Charter is the second largest broadband provider. The company has achieved growth through innovation and acquisitions of cable properties, including completing transactions with Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks. U.S. News and World Report recently named Spectrum Internet as the “**Best Internet Service Provider for Rural Areas.**”⁷ Charter’s commitment to service quality has resulted in Multichannel News naming its Spectrum brand as **Operator of the Year for 2020**, CableFax naming us “**2021 MSO of the Year,**”⁸ and CNET naming Spectrum the “**Best Cable Internet Provider**” for 2022.⁹ Spectrum’s unparalleled commitment to service quality was especially evident in response to the pandemic. Charter’s network continued to perform well despite higher levels of peak bandwidth usage. And Charter accomplished all this while making adjustments to how and where we worked in response to COVID protocols.

Charter has invested nearly \$40 billion in infrastructure and technology over the last five years as part of its long-term commitment to expanding broadband access across urban, suburban and rural areas to connect more Americans. From 2018-2020 alone, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 2.5 million new homes and businesses, about a third in rural areas. Charter has recently announced a \$5 billion dollar initiative through RDOF to connect more than a million currently-unserved, mostly rural families and small businesses to reliable broadband service with speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second, including adding significant resources to its construction department focused solely on adding nearly 115,000 miles of new network infrastructure to its more than 750,000 existing miles. Charter also plans to hire more than 2,000 employees and contractors to support the expansion nationwide. Wisconsin is the state where Charter received its largest RDOF award.

Charter will use the same network deployment and operational procedures in the Project Area that are currently successfully employed across the country. These practices include documented and thoroughly tested methods of managing network performance, managing service issues at a network or customer level, and coordinating change management with minimal or no disruption to customers. All of Charter’s services are delivered over its state-of-the-art network and Charter backs them up with professional customer service and support from local technicians. Charter is dedicated to bringing its clients innovative, reliable services, and responsible care.

In Wisconsin, Charter (and its predecessor companies) have been providing broadband internet service for decades. Charter currently serves over 800 communities in Wisconsin, and provides broadband internet, video and voice service to more than 1.5 million customers, operating more than 40,000 miles of plant. In 2021 Charter began its commitment to build more than 140,000 new, unserved locations in Wisconsin through RDOF. More than \$668 million will be invested in Wisconsin, which includes an expected private investment of approximately \$500 million by Charter and \$168 million in support won by Charter in the FCC’s RDOF auction. For this Project, Charter will be able to draw on the experience and capabilities of its regional and local personnel building and maintaining broadband infrastructure in all of these efforts.

As stated above, Charter has extensive experience building new network across 41 states every year, including deployment of its network into unserved rural areas, is well informed and practiced in adhering to required permitting processes and laws, and has well-established procedures to ensure that its networks are always constructed consistent with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

⁷ U.S. News and World Report, *Best Internet Providers for Rural Areas* (July 8, 2021), <https://www.usnews.com/360-reviews/internet-providers/best-rural>

⁸ <https://www.cablefax.com/event/2021-cablefax-top-ops>

⁹ <https://www.cnet.com/home/internet/best-cable-internet/>

Charter's construction project management system, called PRISM, contains an exhaustive guided workflow to manage all aspects of the construction process, including all necessary federal, state, and/or local governmental permits and approvals. The PRISM permit module enforces strict adherence to permitting rules, ensuring that steps in construction do not proceed without verified and approved permit documentation present in the system. Training is conducted frequently by a dedicated training group in Charter's Field Engineering support organization to ensure Charter's Construction Coordinators are well versed on the business processes and systemic solutions that projects are managed effectively and efficiently.

Prior broadband expansion projects

Charter recognizes the importance of extending broadband service to unserved and underserved rural Wisconsin. Since 2014, Charter has actively participated in the Wisconsin Public Service Commission State Broadband Grant Program and has received 17 broadband grant awards. Twelve of these grant projects have been completed and of the remaining five, one is expected to be completed in the spring of 2022 and the remaining four are expected to be completed by December 31, 2024. Through these public-private projects, thousands of previously unserved and underserved residents now have access to broadband.

The below chart provides a list of our successful public/private broadband expansion efforts in Wisconsin since 2018.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Area	County	Community	Residential and Business Locations added	Activation date	Technology Used	Grant or Full Spectrum Investment
Pardeeville	Columbia	Village of Pardeeville	1045	Jun 2018	Hybrid Fiber Coax	Full Spectrum Investment
Dunn	Dane	Town of Dunn	117	Jun 2018	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Fall River	Columbia	Village of Fall River	780	Mar 2019	Hybrid Fiber Coax	Full Spectrum Investment
King	Lincoln	Town of King	323	Jan 2020	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Monticello	Green	Village of Monticello	567	Feb 2020	Hybrid Fiber Coax	Full Spectrum Investment
Orfordville & Footville	Rock	Villages of Orfordville & Footville	843	July 2020	Hybrid Fiber Coax	Full Spectrum Investment
Menominee	Menominee	Menominee Tribe	210	Dec 2020	FTTP	CARES Act Grant
Walter Dr - Woodruff	Oneida	Town of Woodruff	68	Dec 2020	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Anson	Chippewa	Town of Anson	57	Dec 2020	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Aedan Egan-Belgium	Ozaukee	Village of Belgium	19	Feb 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant

Strawberry Glen – Jackson	Washington	Town of Jackson	46	Feb 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Fairwater – Ripon	Fond du Lac	Town of Ripon	185	May 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Lake Michigan Dr – Sturgeon Bay	Door	Sturgeon Bay	134	Jun 2021	FTTP	State BB Grant
Marquette	Green Lake	Village of Marquette	164	Aug 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Randolph	Columbia	Village of Randolph	837	Oct 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Lyons	Walworth	Town of Lyons	53	Nov 2021	Hybrid Fiber Coax	State BB Grant
Menominee Phase 2	Menominee	Menominee Tribe	26	Dec 2021	FTTP	CARES Act Grant

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Area	County	Community	Residential and Business Locations added	Deadline to complete	Technology Used	Grant or Full Spectrum Investment
Eagle River – Silver Lake, Rangeline & Deerskin	Vilas	Towns of Washington & Lincoln	705	Summer 2022	FTTP	State BB Grant
Racine	Racine County	Countywide	2000	December 31, 2024	FTTP	State BB Grant
Kenosha	Kenosha County	Countywide	918	December 31, 2024	FTTP	State BB Grant
Walworth	Walworth County	Countywide	1648	December 31, 2024	FTTP	State BB Grant
Town of Janesville	Rock	Town of Janesville	39	December 31, 2024	FTTP	State BB Grant

b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

Charter will not build to any existing locations already served by Charter. Moreover, all of the locations proposed for the Project are either “unserved” or “underserved” as defined in Wis. Stat. § 196.504, so the Project does not duplicate any other provider’s existing infrastructure in any “served” area.

c. A description of an applicant’s financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project.

Charter’s proposed Project budget includes only a limited set of Charter’s estimated direct, verifiable costs of construction. These consist of estimated material costs; direct contractor labor to carry out design, make-ready, and construction work; and licensing/permitting expenses. Indirect costs and

certain other direct costs associated with the effort—such as the contributions by Charter’s internal employees on project design, supervision, and management—will be absorbed by Charter as part of its regular operations.

Once constructed, the State can also have a high degree of comfort that the Project will be sustainable. The network will also be backed and operated by Charter, the nation’s second-largest broadband provider with extensive experience owning, operating, maintaining, and upgrading broadband networks, as well as well-recognized financial stability. Charter has substantial cash flow, revolver capacity, and access to the capital markets. Charter’s financial resources and recognized, investment-backed commitment to rural America provide reassurance that Charter will be able to carry out the terms of any grant and continue to operate the system going forward.

Charter Communications, Inc., the company behind the customer-facing brand of Spectrum, is a Fortune 70 company with a market capitalization near \$100 billion. All portions of the project to be funded by Charter will be funded from the company’s general construction budget. Full copies of Charter’s most recent financials can be accessed here:

- Annual Report to Shareholders: <https://ir.charter.com/financial-information/annual-reports>
- SEC Filings: <https://ir.charter.com/financial-information/sec-filings>
- Annual Form 10-K for year ended December 31, 2021: <https://ir.charter.com/static-files/63606f63-1b11-4d60-91a0-5395f1552592>

Charter funds its construction projects using a centralized holding company planning model. For the proposed Project, Charter will aggregate needs and accumulate funds at the holding company level using a mix of available funding pools, including ongoing business free cash flow, existing credit lines, and new bond issuances, which could include high yield or investment grade bonds similar to those in our debt structure today. Our goal is to mix these resources as efficiently as possible. We continually evaluate our collective funding need and utilize funding mechanisms based on what is currently most advantageous for Charter. Our centralized funding entities will then disperse funds to the Charter affiliate participating in the Project to fund the Project on an as needed basis.

Charter has more than adequate cash flow to meet all Project obligations, including both initial construction and ongoing operation of the proposed network. Charter’s free cash flow generally reflects the cash flow from our business that is available for investment, debt repayment, or for distribution to our shareholders in a given year. Free cash flow has already been reduced for our expected interest payments and normal capital expenditures. Charter’s free cash flow in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 was \$2.2b, \$4.6b, \$7.1b, and \$8.7b, respectively. Collectively, our free cash flow, revolver capacity, and access to capital markets reflect more than sufficient resources to fund the proposed Project. In addition, consensus estimates of our ongoing free cash flow would be more than sufficient to fund our debt maturity obligations as they come due, along with allowing us to continue to operate our business, including the build-out systems.

Exhibit A includes 15 documents provided in support of the Project.



March 17, 2022

Ms. Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower - 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

RE: FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

Dear Ms. Coker:

In response to The Fiscal Year 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant Cycle in collaboration with Spectrum Mid-America, LLC, by its manager, Charter Communications Inc. Charter ("Spectrum" or "Charter") hereby submits the enclosed Application, which we believe appropriately recognizes the urgency of the request and sets forth a straight-forward implementable plan to connect the most unserved and underserved homes utilizing the available funding.

Our proposal, if accepted, will deliver robust high speed internet with up to 1 gigabit per second ("Gbps") download and 500 megabits per second ("Mbps") upload speeds, to 1058 locations identified in Spectrum's Application in Wood County, using fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP EPON) technology.

Charter has invested nearly \$40 billion in infrastructure and technology nationally over the last five years as part of its long-term commitment to expanding broadband access across urban, suburban and rural areas to connect more Americans. In 2021, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 1.1 million new homes and businesses across the country, including an additional 41,000 in Wisconsin.

Backed by more than 3,591 local employees, \$670 Million in capital investment in Wisconsin over the last two years, and a robust gigabit capable network, we are uniquely positioned to meet your objectives in a more efficient and meaningful way than any other applicant.

Charter recognizes the urgent need for extending access to reliable broadband to all its residents. Charter, through its Spectrum brand of companies, currently serves approximately 1.5 million customers in Wisconsin, and more than 32 million customers nationwide. Over an advanced communications network, the company offers a full range of state-of-the-art residential and business services including Spectrum Internet, TV, Mobile and Voice.

Our continued commitment to providing broadband in the State is further evidenced by our 2021 announcement to build more than 140,000 unserved locations in Wisconsin through the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund ("RDOF") auction. More than \$668 million will be invested in Wisconsin, which includes an expected private investment of approximately \$500 million by Charter and \$168 million in support won by Charter in the FCC's RDOF auction.

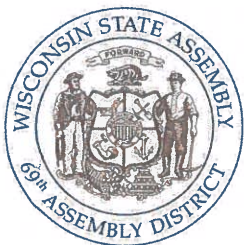
Each day that passes without connectivity increases the gap between those who have broadband and those who do not. We believe this proposal echoes the State's strong desire to bring connectivity to unserved and underserved residents of the state. Charter is excited for the opportunity to work with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission to bring continued major investment of broadband expansion in the State.

Please find the detail of our response enclosed. Again, we are pleased to be considered for such an important and ambitious project. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'AR', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Raschka,
Regional Senior Director, Government Affairs



DONNA M. ROZAR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Office: (608) 267-0280
Toll Free: (888) 534-0069
Rep.Rozar@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

March 14, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Subject: Letter of Support for Charter Wood County Broadband Grant Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Coker:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the above Access Grant. As the State Representative for the 69th Assembly District, I represent the northwestern part of Wood County, where there most certainly is considerable community support for this needed broadband service.

Charter Communications is proposing to expand internet access throughout Wood County by building fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband for 1,058 residents and businesses along the route, which will help businesses in Wood County be more competitive. This increased access to broadband with faster download/upload speeds will also enable activities such as virtual instruction and work, healthcare services, and critical public safety. The total cost is projected to be \$7.9 million, and this Grant assists the funding of necessary broadband expansion to rural communities.

Thank you for your consideration of the application that will be submitted for this project. My contact information is above if you have questions or would like additional information. Please feel free to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Rozar". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Donna" and last name "Rozar" clearly visible.

Donna M. Rozar
State Representative
69th Assembly district



Wood County WISCONSIN

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ZONING

Date: 3/11/2022

Ms. Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Subject: Wood County Broadband Expansion Project

Ms. Steffany Powell Coker,

I am writing this letter in support of the grant application submitted by Charter Communications (Charter) in cooperation with Wood County to provide broadband to unserved and underserved areas in the County. My name is Jason Grueneberg and I am the Director of the Planning & Zoning Department, and am responsible for economic development in the County. The economy of Wood County is dependent on the provision of high-speed broadband to all residents, in order to provide an adequate quality-of-life for families that make up the workforce. Additionally, adequate broadband infrastructure is essential for businesses to function and remain competitive in an ever increasing digital-dependent society.

Wood County is considered a mid-sized Wisconsin County based on its population of 72,999. The County is comprised of 22 townships, 8 villages and 4 cities. Besides the city of Wisconsin Rapids, and the city of Marshfield, most of the municipalities are considered rural in nature and experience the benefits of "small town" quality-of-life. The future sustainability of these rural communities is currently being challenged due to being unserved or underserved when it comes to broadband access. With COVID-19, the divide between communities with and without broadband has dramatically been realized, and it is a defining amenity that will impact which communities thrive and which ones stagnate or slip into decline.

From an economic development perspective, it is well-documented and apparent that areas without adequate broadband face significant disadvantages as compared to communities that are fortunate enough to offer it. Prior to COVID-19, Wood County was well aware of the challenges of minimizing projected population decline in the region. With heightened awareness of the need to have broadband access, this challenge is further exacerbated. Simply put, most of Wood County will not be afforded the opportunity of future growth, and maintain the ability to sustain rural economies without adequate broadband. Future workforce solutions are also dependent on having communities that provide amenities that create a desirable quality-of-life, and the highest priority amenity is broadband.

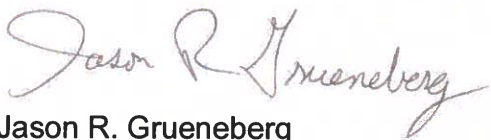
Wood County has a strong agricultural economy as well. As agriculture and agribusiness continues to evolve, we know that the use of technology will continue to increase, as will the dependence on broadband for precision farming, and all other aspects of running a business. Agricultural operations in Wood County generate \$1.1 billion in economic activity annually, and are especially vulnerable given their relatively rural locations in areas with very low population density. For agriculture in the County to remain competitive in the future, it is extremely important that there is access to necessary technology that is dependent on broadband.

As a resident of Wood County I fully realize the quality-of-life benefit of having high-speed broadband access. I am fortunate enough to live in the town of Grand Rapids that is served by 2 telecommunications providers. In the past few months I have been able to work from home and facilitate WebEx meetings for large groups across the region from my home office. My 2 daughters have been able to learn virtually from home. My family has been able to utilize telehealth options without putting a strain on an already stressed healthcare system. We have been able to stay in touch with family and friends in a virtual manner without risking the health of those who are high risk or furthering the spread of COVID-19. With recreation and entertainment options currently limited due to COVID-19, we are still able to spend family time together streaming entertainment and news.

I sympathize with the families that are not fortunate to have access to the broadband I take for granted. After the last few months I realize that I probably would never consider moving anywhere without having some level of high-speed broadband, and I know that I am not alone in this way of thinking. With this in mind I strongly support Charter's application to provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas. Access is essential to the current and future populations of these areas that make up our workforce, and will determine if the economies of these areas stagnate or flourish. Much of Wood County's geographic area is considered unserved and underserved when it comes to broadband. Please help position Wood County for economic growth by providing financial support for broadband infrastructure investments during this grant funding cycle.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the importance of broadband to Wood County's economy, please contact me at 715-421-8478 or jgrueneberg@co.wood.wi.us. Thank you for considering the grant applications to provide much-needed broadband for Wood County.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason R. Grueneberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and last name "Grueneberg" clearly legible, and "R." as a small initial in the middle.

Jason R. Grueneberg
Director of Wood County Planning and Zoning/Economic Development



Wood County WISCONSIN

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ZONING

3-11-2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Coker,

I am writing today in support of Charter Communications (Charter) and Wood County's joint application for a broadband expansion grant for a project within Wood County. Wood County is pleased to partner with Charter, particularly in light of the financial commitment offered by Charter to fund 51% of the project to reach 1058 unserved and underserved locations.

The project will be a joint effort between Wood County and Charter, with Charter acting as lead applicant and assuming responsibility for the construction and operation of the proposed network. Funds requested in this application will be used solely for the purpose of constructing and installing broadband infrastructure throughout the designated grant area.

In support of Charter's efforts to complete the project, Wood County will work with and assist Charter in removing obstacles that arise outside of Charter's control, such as local permitting issues, pole attachments, and access to rights-of-way and easements. To the extent it is within its scope of authority, Wood County would work with Charter to help remove these types of obstacles. Wood County will also assist with the public outreach and education on this project so that local officials and residents are aware of the benefits of Charter's broadband infrastructure investments.

This project is very important to the people of Wood County and will have substantial impact on this community. Extending broadband service to this project area will provide economic development benefits for small businesses working hard to stay in operation despite the COVID-19 pandemic, support for remote and work from home employees, and support for those individuals who could re-enter the workforce if they could resolve childcare issues by working remotely. Wood County will see similar benefits of broadband expansion on improved access to remote learning within the affected school districts.

We are committed to partnering with Charter to help ensure that they can accomplish a project of this size within the time constraints required by the grant award. We look forward to working with Charter to deliver greater broadband access in Wood County and we respectfully request that the Public Service Commission grant the award to continue the important work of expanding broadband access in Wood County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth Curry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Kenneth Curry
Wood County Conservation, Education & Economic Development Committee Chair

March 11, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower, 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the Wood County Broadband Project proposed by Charter Communications. This project will bring fiber to the premise to approximately 1,058 locations in North and South Wood County.

Mid-State is one of 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System, offering associate degrees, technical diplomas, and industry credentials in a variety of high-demand fields. With campuses in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids the College district serves a resident population of over 172,000 while also serving 19 public, private, charter, alternative school districts.

All levels of our educational system stand to gain from this project. Broadband can overcome geographical and financial barriers to provide a wide range of educational experiences which we know lead to socio-economic equalization. At Mid-State, we serve nearly 7,000 students per year and our largest campus is located in Wisconsin Rapids, in southern Wood County. Broadband makes it possible for students to attend virtual classes from home – something that many students may not have the ability to do, even more so with the current COVID19 pandemic. In fact, when the pandemic began, Mid-State transitioned just over 80% of our classes to a virtual format. With many of our students not having access to reliable broadband, the college invested in parking lot internet technology so students could come to campus and complete virtual classes and assignments from their cars. Not ideal, but necessary. Although we have transitioned some classes back to an in-person format, Mid-State is still offering flexible class options which means that many students still attend classes virtually making broadband expansion a crucial element to their ongoing success.

Beyond virtual learning at the college level, our local K-12 districts are filled with students without access to fast, reliable, and affordable internet, affecting their ability to fully experience educational opportunities which in turn shapes their future career success. Additionally, many of our local business partners also operate in rural communities and a broadband expansion would also support data management and overall business sustainability and growth.

While at the College proper, we meet the standard 100 Mb/s download and upload speeds and added repeaters to our parking lots, however, to support our students within their homes, our local rural businesses, community members, and K12 students we highly advocate for this expansion. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 715-422-5421 or at bobbi.damrow@mstc.edu. Thank you for your consideration.


Respectfully,

Dr. Bobbi Damrow
Vice President of Workforce Development and Community Relations
Mid-State Technical College

Adams Campus
401 North Main Street
Adams, WI 53910-9653

Marshfield Campus
2600 West Fifth Street
Marshfield, WI 54449-3299

Stevens Point Campus
1001 Centerpoint Drive
Stevens Point, WI 54481-3195

Wisconsin Rapids Campus
500 32nd Street North
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494-5599



3/12/2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission

Public Service Commission

4822 Madison Yards Way

North Tower, 6th floor

Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the proposed Wood County Broadband Project in partnership with Charter Communications, which will bring fiber to the home of residents that live in the Towns of Port Edwards and Saratoga.

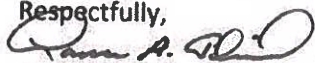
I write today, coming from a couple of different perspectives, but with a common need. I am the long time Wood County Board Chairman as well as the Broker/Manager of two First Weber Real Estate Inc. branch offices located in southern part of the county.

As an elected official, I've had to deal with problems related to a lack of access to internet service, for business expansion, school districts, and provision of tele-health options. This became highly apparent during and due to Covid-19 restrictions. It's imperative that we develop high speed access for all residents of the county, with minimal speeds of 100mps up and down.

Secondly, and no less important, I've been a real estate broker for more than 30 years. I can unequivocally state, that even before the challenges Covid brought in 2020, there were buyers that refused to even consider a home without fiber and internet speeds of at least 100mps both up and down. If a property does not have internet access, where one can work remotely from home, or access school curriculum, there is a tremendous loss in value. Beside decreased value of the home, which can range anywhere from 5-10%, there are other financial implications impacting both families and governmental units. It also tends to create technology deserts where the ability to sell your home becomes extremely difficult. Entire communities suffer and can eventually disappear.

I am highly in support of the Wood County Broadband Project in partnership with Charter Communications. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me by phone or email. 715-213-4002 or email lance1@charter.net

Respectfully,



Lance A. Pliml

Wood County Board Chair



3/13/2022

Ms. Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Subject: Charter Communications Wood County Broadband Expansion Project

Hello Ms. Powell Coker,

My name is Rhonda Carrell. I am an elected Supervisor on the Board in the Town of Saratoga, Wood County. We are a rural residential community that is experiencing transition. We are south of Wisconsin Rapids and north of Adams County, Town of Rome. Within the boundaries of Saratoga, we are witnessing the development of two utility-scale solar arrays. Rome's Sand Valley development has brought much revenue into the area and Saratoga is between the Wisconsin Rapids airport and Sand Valley.

We are aware there is a great need for residential development in the area and Saratoga has the vacant land that would support this type of new development. We are also working toward rural commercial development along the state highway corridors. We have broadband issues within the town, as signal is spotty or unavailable for some residents and businesses. We have seen this as a safety issue with emergency responders, also.

Economic growth in our community is essential and improved broadband would be helpful. COVID has shown us a different world, with many people working from home. It is necessary to be able to provide that option for all residents and businesses. Another aspect of growth that is reliant on this much needed technology is that with our aging demographic it is important that we attract and retain young people/families. This grant could easily help to remedy our issues with lack of service.

I am supportive of the grant application submitted by Charter Communications in working with Wood County because it would provide telecommunications for some that have no availability. It would also be good to have a second provider as an option for those that are currently with Solarus.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration.

Rhonda Carrell
Town of Saratoga Supervisor:
Owner of Headlines



Wood County WISCONSIN

3-11-22

Ms. Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI. 53705-9100

Subject: Charter Communications Wood County Broadband Expansion Project

My name is Bill Leichnam; I am a Wood County Board Supervisor, District # 19, and a Town of Saratoga Board supervisor. In both elective positions, I see the economic disadvantages imposed upon "unserved and underserved" residents who need improved broadband services in rural areas in order to work from home, access the internet for educational and shopping purposes and prosper economically on par with more urban residents. On a personal level, when anyone in our home wants cell service, they have to stand outside on our deck to get one bar of service. Constituents have difficulty contacting me as their representative in local government. Having access to improved broadband could provide a potential economic impact of at least 3-5%, contribute to workforce development by enhancing opportunities to "work-at-home", and raise residential property values at least 10-15%.

On the Wood County Board, I serve on the CEED (Conservation, Education, & Economic Development) Committee where improved broadband is a monthly agenda item. Having grown up in a rural community of Clark County, I've witnessed a steady decline in the size and the ability of rural communities to provide essential services and the amenities of life to their residents. As a retired educator, I recognize the importance of being instantly connected to the outside world. In an ever-evolving global and technological society, rural America without adequate upload and download speeds, is falling farther and farther behind. We can not allow this alarming trend to continue.

In some areas of rural Wood County, Solarus provides internet services. Fiber is yet to arrive at my home. Approving the Charter grant would bring fiber to approximately 300 locations in Saratoga. I support the Charter Communications Wood County Broadband Expansion Project knowing it would supply a much needed second telecommunications provider.

During this grant funding cycle, I would ask your help in better positioning rural Wood County for economic growth by providing support for improved broadband infrastructure.

Thank you!

Bill Leichnam
Wood County Board Supervisor, Dist. # 19; Town of Saratoga Board Supervisor
715-886-5107; <sespotsy@wctc.net

Port Edwards School District

801 Second Street, Port Edwards, WI 54469-1301
715-887-9000

Elementary School FAX: 715-887-9095

John Edwards Middle & High Schools FAX: 715-887-9040

www.pesd.k12.wi.us

March 10, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker;

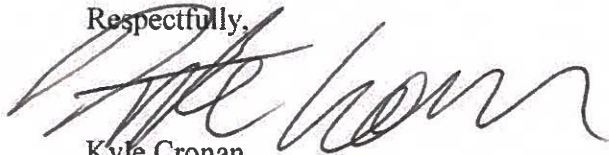
I am writing in support of the proposed Wood County Broadband Project in partnership with Charter Communications, which will bring fiber to the home to students in the School District of Port Edwards who live in the Town of Port Edwards.

The need for improved broadband in the more rural areas of the District is distinct.

- Port Edwards School District has approximately 445 students in a District that is spread between just over 60 square miles for a density of 6.88 students per square mile. In reality though, once you travel outside of the village townsites where the majority of students live, the density is much lower.
- Over 43% of our students are considered economically disadvantaged, with over 50% of our middle school population being considered economically disadvantaged and 13 students this year classified as homeless.
- Finally, we are working to offer a robust set of course offerings to our students, including classes through Start College Now at Mid-State Technical College. Many of these high level classes are virtual and this requires our students to have a robust technology infrastructure for support.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 715-887-9000 ext. 102 or at cronaky@pesd.k12.wi.us. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Kyle Cronan
District Administrator

Improving America's future . . . one student at a time.

Kyle Cronan
Superintendent
Extension 102
cronaky@pesd.k12.wi.us

Donna Shroda
6-12 Principal
Extension 103
shroddo@pesd.k12.wi.us

Cara Christy
4K-5 Principal, Special Education Director
Extension 101
chrisca@pesd.k12.wi.us

Lisa Miller
Business Director
Extension 107
millell@pesd.k12.wi.us



Marshfield Clinic Health System

Marshfield Medical Center
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449

March 10, 2022

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support for the Charter/Spectrum Wood County Broadband Expansion Grant proposal

Marshfield Clinic is an integrated health system located in Marshfield, WI serving central, north-central and north-western Wisconsin, this includes patients who reside in Wood County. We are a Mission, Vision and Value's driven organization that strives to "Enrich the Lives of those we serve". MCHS has used Telehealth to reach unserved and underserved populations throughout Wisconsin since 1997.

MCHS is supportive of the efforts of this proposed project in Wood County and offer this letter of support for their grant application. This project will expand broadband and increase resiliency in the Wood County Market.

Over the course of the last 6 years, MCHS has worked closely with the communities we serve in an effort to help them prepare for a time in which more healthcare can be delivered using technology directly into the patient's home. The COVID-19 Pandemic accelerated the move to delivering care via telehealth much more quickly than expected. However, Telehealth was able to respond quickly and offer continued access to healthcare services by our patients throughout the Pandemic. Since March of 2020, MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the Pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services.

Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away. Federal legislation is expected to make these new flexibilities to use telehealth permanent. Telehealth visits allow patients better access to healthcare without the need to travel or miss work or school. This allows patients to more conveniently maintain their chronic illness appointments, have a visit with their Primary Care Doctor or complete needed follow-up care. A number of new services are likely to join the array of telehealth services already offered by health systems across the country. A patient's access to broadband at home will be a determining factor in which services they can consume and which they cannot. MCHS will be at the forefront of offering these new care modalities.

Collaborative efforts are needed to expand broadband across Wisconsin and MCHS is proud to support this Broadband expansion project and we urge the Public Service Commission to fund this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Turney MD, MS, FACP, FACMPE
CEO



Unified School District of Marshfield

March 9, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower, 6th floor
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Steffany Powell Coker:

I am writing in support of the proposed Charter Spectrum Wood County Broadband Application. If funded, this project will bring fiber-to-the-home for Unified School District of Marshfield students in parts of the underserved Towns of Cameron, Lincoln and Rock.

All levels of our school system stand to gain from this project as improved broadband could help our families overcome geographical and financial barriers and provide students a wider range of educational and cultural opportunities. For our students, reliable broadband is of critical importance when it comes to their capability to attend virtual/remote learning while at home. Many of our rural students continue to experience significant limitations in their capacity to complete virtual/remote learning from home, which has only been exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic. When reliable Internet connectivity is not available to assist students with completing their school work at home, great burden (time, financial, etc.) is placed on families as they must find other means for Internet provision. Beyond virtual learning and homework, high-quality residential Internet service can serve as a gateway to diverse world-of-work exploration experiences that allow students to learn about post-secondary education options, research careers, and communicate with others. Broadband access also increases students' opportunities to engage unique course offerings, such as college credit classes and other advanced coursework, which can enhance high school students' college and career readiness.

If you have any questions for me or would like more information about the Unified School District of Marshfield, feel free to contact me at christiansonr@marshfieldschools.org or 715-387-1101 [ext. #1114]. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan Christianson, Ed.D
Superintendent
Unified School District of Marshfield



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

Empowering all students to succeed in a global community

www.nekoosasd.net

Terry Whitmore

terry_whitmore@nekoosa.k12.wi.us

Telephone (715) 886-8000

Fax (715) 886-8012

March 9, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker:

I write on behalf of the School District of Nekoosa in support of the proposed Wood County Broadband Project in partnership with Charter Communications, which will bring fiber to the homes of students being served by Nekoosa Public Schools in the Town of Saratoga.

The School District of Nekoosa is a small, diverse, pre-kindergarten through grade 12 public school district located in Central Wisconsin on the beautiful Wisconsin River. The district is located in southern Wood County and is comprised of families from the townships of Armenia, Port Edwards, Rome, Saratoga, and Nekoosa. The Village of Nekoosa can be described as a typical rural Wisconsin small town and has nearly 2,700 residents. Economically, the Nekoosa community is primarily supported by the manufacturing and machining industries, the paper milling industry, tourism and recreation, and the Ho-Chunk Nation. According to the American Community Survey, Nekoosa residents consistently rank at the bottom of household incomes in Wood County. Nekoosa area residents rank the lowest in mean household income; the second-lowest median household income; and the second-highest percentage of households with less than a \$35,000 household income.

With the presence of COVID over the last couple of years, our District has required, on many occasions, for students to engage in school work while staying at home. In many cases, for students that did not have solid connectivity, they missed out on engaging real time with the rest of their classmates (synchronously via video) and were forced to learn via packets and/or asynchronous learning. To date, as our school system has learned to better utilize technology to support learning, much to the pandemic, students without strong internet access continue to miss out on remote learning opportunities.

Again, on behalf of the School District of Nekoosa, thank you for supporting this project. One day, in the near future, all students in the District will have access to the resources afforded by the world wide web - giving them opportunities to learn, explore, and network with others around the world. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 715-459-7449 or at terry_whitmore@nekoosa.k12.wi.us.

Sincerely,

Terry Whitmore
District Administrator
Nekoosa Public Schools



March 9, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Subject: Charter Spectrum Wood County Broadband Application.

Ms. Powell Coker,

On behalf of the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MACCI), I am writing in support of Charter Spectrum fiber to premise expansion efforts. This project would serve an additional 1,058 locations county-wide, of which 350 locations would be in the MACCI rural service area including the towns of Cameron, Lincoln, Marshfield, Richfield and Rock. Business success and growth is dependent on reliable, and affordable internet service, as it allows business to complete nearly all aspects of operations.

Broadband is a critical recruitment and retention tool for industry. As a chamber of commerce representing the best interests of our 500 business members and their 21,000 employees and an economic development organization providing leadership and support for the economic advancement of our county and communities; equitable broadband service is as critical for business sustainability and growth, as is, access to reliable energy and a transportation infrastructure.

For businesses to grow, they must be able to attract a qualified, skilled workforce. For that to occur, regions, counties, areas, communities must offer Quality of Place attributes. These attributes are an affordable place to live, cultural and recreational options offered, good schools are available, adequate public safety is present and as importantly, equitable, efficient broadband communication services. Many businesses and their associates lack access to the minimum broadband access speeds of 25/3 mbps; much less, access to the new federal guidelines of 100/100 mbps internet speeds.

The goal of the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Wood County partnering with Charter Spectrum on a grant application to the PSC is to bring a minimum internet speed of

Scott Larson, EDFP, IOM // President // larson.scott@marshfieldchamber.com
700 S. Central Avenue, Marshfield, WI 54449 // PH 715-384-3454 // FAX 715-387-8925
WWW.MARSHFIELDCHAMBER.COM

100 mpbs download and 25 mpbs upload, scalable to 100/100, to all residents of Wood County. These new internet speeds would comply with federal guidelines. This project will bring fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) for residents and businesses. This would allow for the following enhancements:

- Public safety operations are improved, thus improving the quality of life for residents in Wood County.
- Improvement in the quality of education services offered to students, thus making Wood County a more attractive place to live.
- Improvements to the ability of healthcare providers to enhance medical services to rural residents in Wood County.
- Improvements to the quality of life by offering flexible work arrangements, access to more career and entertainment opportunities for Wood County residents.

The lack of or inadequate broadband services in the Wood County area make it difficult, if not impossible, to perform necessary work in rural areas of the county. Rural school districts struggle to offer virtual instruction due to the inadequate broadband service. This reveals the digital inequity and disadvantages to rural residents in Wood County.

For these reasons, it is critical that broadband services upgrades occur. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 715-384-3454 or at larson.scott@marshfieldchamber.com . Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Scott Larson
President
Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 8, 2022

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Attn: Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Ms. Coker:

Please accept this letter in support of the efforts of the Southern Wood County Broadband Expansion Project, and Charter Communications, as they apply for a Broadband Grant through the Public Service Commission. This project is located in and around the 70th Assembly District.

As State Representative for the 70th Assembly District and Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Rural Development, I have worked hard to improve access for residents of rural and underserved areas of the state and throughout my legislative district because I know how important access to broadband internet service is to communities, workers, businesses, and students.

The approval of this grant proposal would allow residents, students and our future workforce to continue to adequately prepare for the challenges of a changing economy. Additionally, the approval of this proposal would allow current residents, workers, and business owners to have the tools they need to continue to succeed in the digital age and in a dynamic economy.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this request and ask that this proposal be given serious consideration. If there are any questions, concerns, or reservations about the proposal, I would respectfully ask that you work with the key stakeholders to help try to help remedy them. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy VanderMeer", is positioned below the text "With appreciation,".

Nancy VanderMeer
State Representative



PATRICK TESTIN
STATE SENATOR

March 8th, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Secretary Coker,

I am writing to express my support for the broadband expansion grant application filed by Wood County and Charter Communications.

This public-private partnership would result in a fiber build that would benefit more than 1,000 homes and businesses in the Northwestern and Southeastern portions of Wood County.

Internet is infrastructure, and in today's increasingly connected world, going without high speed internet severely limits access to opportunity for individuals and businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of this application, and know that its fulfillment will help bridge a gap in opportunity for many deserving people and businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Testin", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Testin
WI State Senator,
Senate District 24

STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



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Office: (608) 266-7511 • Toll Free: (888) 437-9436
Sen.Bernier@legis.wi.gov • www.SenatorBernier.com

March 11, 2021

Attn: Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Ms. Powell Coker,

On behalf of the residents of the Marshfield area, I am writing to express my strong support for Charter Communications' Broadband Expansion Grant application that will aid these areas in the district I represent in the State Legislature.

Residents in rural areas need access to high speed internet to help reach emergency services quickly, to participate in the online economy, to pursue educational opportunities, and to help maintain their position in the workforce or to re-enter it in the unfortunate event of a job loss.

Charter Communications has consistently served the residents of Wood County and has shown great commitment to their customers by continuing to improve their infrastructure. The company plans to improve broadband service by upgrading the fiber network to increase internet speeds for approximately 1058 homes and businesses in the area.

Charter Communications' plan is an indication of the company's vision and familiarity with the area's needs and how to fulfill them. This proposal will meet a real need in our area and I hope that it will serve as a model for internet providers in underserved rural towns that are in need of assistance. With a growing reliance on the internet and online services, I am confident that this project will provide broadband internet and a world of new opportunities for my constituents.

I strongly support this critical project and appreciate your consideration of this important grant application. If you have any further questions about the for Charter Communications' Broadband Expansion Grant application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Bernier".

Kathy Bernier
State Senator
23rd Senate District